



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: September 19, 2003
Release Number: 03-63

Contact: Carol Chastang (202) 205-6987
Internet Address: <http://www.sba.gov/opc>

SBA Honors Outstanding Disaster Recovery Efforts

WASHINGTON – Three New Yorkers who worked behind the scenes in the aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks, and a restaurant owner in upstate New York whose business was destroyed in a fire will be presented the “Phoenix Award” during the U.S. Small Business Administration’s National Entrepreneurial Conference and Expo September 17-19.

The awards will be presented during a breakfast at the Washington Hilton & Towers on September 19.

“During times of crisis these four people displayed selflessness and courage, and made remarkable contributions to the recovery of their communities,” said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. “The Phoenix Award is SBA’s acknowledgement of their heroic efforts.”

New York restaurant owner Albert Capsouto will receive the Phoenix Award for Small Business Economic Injury Recovery. After the World Trade Center attacks, Capsouto had to close Capsouto Freres for 10 days. His business suffered severe economic injury, yet he reopened the restaurant less than two weeks later, received an SBA economic injury disaster loan, pooled his resources and fed hundreds of relief workers and local residents for the next three weeks. Capsouto’s efforts drew a new customer base.

In the weeks following September 11, Darlene Newman worked for the American Red Cross, and then volunteered in the call center of ReSTART Central, a newly formed agency working to help business owners affected by the attacks. Newman worked more than 40 hours a week, handling a portfolio of 20 open cases at a time, far above the average of 10 cases for most volunteers. Newman will receive the Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contribution to Disaster Recovery by a Volunteer.

James King was in Dallas on September 11. When air travel was grounded, King, state director of the New York Small Business Development Center, used his cell phone to coordinate his agency’s resources to assist small business owners. Within days, his team was working with national SBA officials and Small Business Development Centers across the country. He created the World Trade Center Small Business Recovery Fund, which received a \$2 million investment from the state. The proceeds were used to help companies in the area with working capital to stay in business. King will receive the Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contribution to Disaster Recovery by a Public Official.

--more--

In March 2002, a fire in Carthage, NY destroyed several buildings in the downtown area. Stefano Magro lost his restaurant and pizzeria, as well as two other buildings and seven tenant-occupied apartments.

Magro was determined to keep his 25 employees working. He received an SBA disaster loan, and within three weeks he rented a building and reopened his restaurant. Meanwhile, he is moving ahead with plans to rebuild in the original location. Stefano Magro will receive the Phoenix Award for Small Business Disaster Recovery.

Since 1998, the SBA has presented the Phoenix Awards to business owners and individuals who displayed courage, resourcefulness and tenacity in the aftermath of a deadly disaster, while contributing to the rebuilding of their communities.

The SBA makes disaster loans to homeowners, renters, and businesses of all sizes. During fiscal year 2002, the SBA approved more than 21,800 disaster loans for \$1.3 billion. More than \$1 billion in loans were made to businesses that suffered losses in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

To find out more about the SBA's disaster assistance program, visit the Web site at www.sba.gov/disaster.

###